

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: City Year, Inc.

Application ID: 13AC145297

Program Name: City Year New Hampshire

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) The applicant provides descriptive data that illustrates the need for intervention. The eight schools targeted for intervention are designated as Schools in Need of Improvement. Assessment scores indicate that a high percentage of students score below the proficient level in reading, mathematics, and writing. Also, targeted high schools have graduation rates that are among the lowest in the state.

(+) A specific student population is distinctly identified: seven elementary and one middle school in the Manchester School District will be served. The targeted population has the highest dropout rate in the state with one of four high school students not graduating.

(+) The applicant demonstrates that targeted schools are economically disadvantaged, with almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch.

(+) The applicant clearly describes its intention to utilize the project to improve problems of absenteeism, behavior, and English and math deficiencies through targeted interventions.

(+) AmeriCorps members will serve at the target schools to provide services that address the needs present in the target schools. Also, project Members will partner with schools to improve the entire school climate, thus having a positive effect on students through graduation. These services contribute to the major goal of increasing students' retention and graduation rates.

(+) The application is very detailed in the description of Member activities. Groups of AmeriCorps members will be housed in each of the targeted schools to provide activities that address the needs described earlier in the narrative. These activities include tutoring, mentoring, coaching, and afterschool programming.

(+) Almost all faculty at the targeted schools indicate that AmeriCorps services are valuable to students and would not be provided to students without the presence of project Members. The program's model appears to provide a strong Member presence and intervention in many aspects of student engagement, from strengthening academics to

providing emotional support.

(+) The applicant describes how the Member activities provide added value to the educational experience of an at-risk group both within a school day and after school. Opportunities for coordinated planning and strategizing with the classroom teacher are included in the project.

(+) The applicant describes a variety of assessment tools and indicators aligned to the Early Warning Indicators for students at risk for dropping out of high school: standardized and other assessments of math and English, Social-Emotional assessment tool, attendance data, and disciplinary data.

(+) District standardized achievement tests, Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, and the district's Math Trimester Assessment are among the measures of academic achievement used to assess the effectiveness of the program.

(+) The applicant will utilize a variety of measurement instruments to measure student impact. These include faculty and administrator surveys, standardized instruments, and school/classroom records. The applicant describes professionally-developed tools and frequent documentation to describe both quantitative and qualitative impact.

(+) Past performance in meeting performance goals shows that most performance measures have been met; student achievement and behavior have improved significantly compared to baselines. The applicant has used past performance measurements to impact future goal establishment.

(-) One of the significant research studies appears to be dated (Finn's research from the summer of 1989). This study may lend questionable relevance to the success of the program's model.

(-) The applicant states the need for more adult presence in the students' school environment; however, this need is not sufficiently supported in the narrative; also, the connection between additional adult presence in the target schools to ameliorating the problems in target schools is not sufficiently supported in the narrative.

(-) The specific role of Team Leader and Project Leader is less clearly specified.